

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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O 201111Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8010
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL KADUNA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NI
SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKE: SITUATION REMAINS TENSE

REF: LAGOS 4920

1. SUMMARY: THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE TENSE AROUND UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS (UNILAG) CAMPUS AND REPORTS OF STUDENT/POLICE CONFRONTATIONS IN OTHER AREAS OF NIGERIA HAVE BEGUN TO TRICKLE IN. THE NATIONAL UNION OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS (NUNS) HAS REFUSED TO MEET WITH THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COUNCIL (NUC) TO DISCUSS THEIR GRIEVANCES. THE CONFIRMED DEATH OF ONE STUDENT AND ONE BYSTANDER SHOULD FURTHER AGGREGATE THE SITUATION. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL CLASHES APRIL 20 IN LAGOS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE TENSE AROUND UNILAG CAMPUS AND EMBASSY EMPLOYEE SAW ABOUT 500 STUDENTS MORNING OF APRIL 20 WHO SAID THEY PLANNED TO MARCH ON DODAN BARRACKS TO PROTEST DEATH OF
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STUDENT KILLED IN EARLIER POLICE/STUDENT CONFRONTATION. JUNIOR STUDENT AT UNILAG REPORTEDLY DIED FROM GUNSHOT WOUNDS. A PREGNANT WOMAN LIVING NEAR CAMPUS ALSO DIED, REPORTEDLY DUE TO INHALATION OF TEAR GAS. A NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS WERE INJURED AT UNILAG.

3. OLADUNJOYE S. OLADITAN, PRESIDENT OF UNILAG STUDENTS UNION, SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO CAUSE FOR POLICE FIRE AND MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO PRESS: "SOME OF OUR STUDENTS WERE IN THE CAMPUS WHILE THE POLICE WERE OUTSIDE THE GATE AND WERE EXCHANGING ABUSES. AT THIS TIME THE OCCASIONAL EXCHANGE OF MISSILES BETWEEN US AND THE POLICE HAD EVEN SUBSIDES."

4. FOLLOWING SESSION OF UNILAG SENATE (GOVERNING BODY), VICE CHANCELLOR (PRESIDENT) PROFESSOR ADE AJAYI SAID, "WE HAVE DELIBERATED ON HOW WE CAN CALM THE SITUATION NOW BUT HOW CAN WE FUNCTION UNDER THIS CIRCUMSTANCE? WE CAN'T FUNCTION. WE HAVE BEEN ASKING THEM (POLICE) TO MOVE AWAY."

5. NEW NIGERIAN REPORTED THAT NUNS PRESIDENT OKEOWO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM KANO, ENUGU, NSUKKA, CALABAR AND ILORIN WHEN HE MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT AT CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY YESTERDAY: "THE POLICE HAVE DONE IT AGAIN. BECAUSE THE STUDENTS OF THIS COUNTRY WANT EDUCATION, THEY ARE TO PAY WITH THEIR BLOOD. NOW ALL OUR DEMANDS MUST BE MET. IT MUST BE FREE EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS OR LET THEM TAKE THEIR UNIVERSITIES. NO MORE LECTURES."

6. THE NUC HAD CALLED A MEETING AT THE NATIONAL THEATER YESTERDAY, BUT MOST STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES APPARENTLY BOYCOTTED SESSION. OKEOWO REPORTEDLY SAID THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUCH A MEETING AND SUGGESTED THAT A MEETING HE HAD REQUESTED EARLIER INVOLVING YAR'ADUA, THE NUC, THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND FEDERAL LOANS BOARD BE HELD TO DISCUSS SITUATION.

7. MEANWHILE REPORTS HAVE BEGUN TO TRICKLE IN OF STUDENT POLICE CONFRONTATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF IFE, IBADAN AND IKORIN. REPORTEDLY THE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ARE HOLDING SOME POLICEMEN HOSTAGE DEMANDING RELEASE OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DETAINED THERE.

8. COMMENT: WHILE POLICE ACTIONS HAVE CONFINED PROBLEMS TO CAMPUSES, RESULTING INJURIES AND DEATHS HAVE AGGRAVATED ALREADY TENSE SITUATION. ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF STUDENT LEADERS APPEAR DESIGNED TO INCITE FURTHER PROBLEMS. SITUATION IS DIFFICULT FOR FMG. IF YAR'ADUA AND OTHERS MEET WITH STUDENT LEADERS, OKEOWO'S PRESTIGE WILL HAVE BEEN ELEVATED AND STUDENT PROTEST WILL HAVE AT LEAST PARTIALLY SUCCEEDED. IN THE MEANTIME, POLICE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY TIRED FROM SEVERAL DAYS OF ACTIVE CONFRONTATION, THUS INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF FURTHER VIOLENT CLASHES.
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